

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5716

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3346

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST ARGENTINE JEWS?

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3002

1. LEON TIEFFENBERG TOLD EMBOFF MAY 18 THAT LAST WEEK HE WAS ABLE TO SEE HIS SON BY BRIBING A GUARD. ACCORDING TO TIEFFENBERG, HIS SON IS BEING HELD BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES IN LA PLATA, AND HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO VARIOUS FORMS OF TORTURE. TIEFFENBERG SAID SON CLAIMED AUTHORITIES ARE NOT ACCUSING HIM OF CONNECTIONS WITH SUBVERSIVE GROUPS AND HAVE NOT EVEN RAISED THE QUESTION OF HIS COMMUNIST AFFILIATION; RATHER, QUESTIONS THEY HAVE PUT TO HIM DURING INTERROGATION HAVE HAD TO DO WITH HIS AND FATHER'S ALLEGED ACTIVITIES IN FAVOR OF ISRAEL. FATHER CLAIMS SON TOLD HIM INTERROGATORS CALLED HIM "JEW DOG" WHILE ADMINISTERING BEATINGS AND ELECTRIC SHOCK.

2. FATHER, LEON TIEFFENBERG, IS EXTREMELY DISTURBED NOT ONLY OVER HIS SON'S SITUATION, BUT OVER WHAT HE REGARDS AS POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE POGROM. TIEFFENBERG WAS QUICK TO SAY THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE HIS SON'S TREATMENT REFLECTED THE OFFICIAL LINE OF THE NEW GOA. ON THE CONTRARY, HE SAID HE WAS SURE PRESIDENT VIDELA AND MODERATES AROUND HIM WOULD BE SURPRISED AND SHOCKED IF THEY KNEW OF SUCH CASES. PROBLEM, HE SAID, WAS AT LOWEER LEVEL. THERE ARE MANY HARDLINERS IN ARMED FORCES WHO ARE ANTI-SEMITIC AND IN TIEFFENBERG'S OPINION SOME OF THESE, SENSING THAT THERE IS NO SURE HAND AT THE HELM, ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION TO VENT THEIR PREJUDICES. HE COMMENTED THAT IF HARDLINERS

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EVER GAIN CONTROL, ARGENTINA WOULD NOT BE A FIT PLACE

FOR JEWS TO LIVE; HENCE, HE PLANS TO SELL ALL HIS HOLDINGS,
TRY TO GET HIS SON OUT OF JAIL, AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY.

3. EMBASSY HAS CONSULTED WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY IN ARGENTINA. ON THE BASIS OF THOSE CONSULTATIONS,
WE BELIEVE CASE OF JACOBO TIEFFENBERG IS AN ISOLATED ONE
WHICH DOES NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL POLICIES OR ATTITUDES OF THE
PRESENT GOVERNMENT. EVEN SO, THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE THAT
TIEFFENBERG MAY BE RIGHT IN HIS ASSESSMENT THAT CERTAIN
ANTI-SEMITIC COMMANDERS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION
TO VENT THEIR PERSONAL PREJUDICES. WE UNDERSTAND, FOR
EXAMPLE, THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE DAIA IN CORDOBA WAS
ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTER THE COUP AND IS STILL BEING HELD
ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT BEEN CHARGED EITHER WITH SUBVERSIVE
CONNECTIONS OR WITH CORRUPTION. SEVERAL PROMINENT JEWISH
LEADERS IN BUENOS AIRES ARE ASKING THEMSELVES WHETHER
HE MAY HAVE BEEN ARRESTED SIMPLY BECAUSE HE IS A JEW.

4. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW THIS SITUATION CAREFULLY AND
REPORT ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.
HILL

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